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Launch of "Human Resources Policy Unit: Japan Innovative Schools Network Supported by OECD"

Kumiko Tonoki Project Academic Support Specialist

● Have you heard about the OECD Tohoku School?

The OECD Tohoku School was set up with support from the OECD and the local community to provide "creative reconstruction training" that could foster an ability to resolve problems on their own in junior and senior high school students from the Fukushima, Miyagi, and Iwate regions hit by the Great East Japan Earthquake.

The school culminated with an event in Paris, where the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has its headquarters, at which presentations were given on the attractions of the Tohoku region and its reconstruction, with 84 high school students from the earthquake-affected regions presenting ways of assisting in the reconstruction that they had come up with during the three years since 2012. Recognition of the school's success has led to calls from those involved, including the OECD secretariat, to deepen the initiative and extend it nationwide.

In response, the Human Resources Policy Unit has been set up at the Graduate School of Public Policy (GraSPP), with a central role being played by Kan Suzuki, a Professor at GraSPP who has had a comprehensive involvement in educational problems in such roles as ex-Senior Vice Minister and current Special Advisor, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. The Japan Innovative Schools Network Supported by OECD was launched under the management of this unit with the aim of studying and implementing 21st century education, with its activities including setting up the Innovative Schools Network 2030 project that would take over from the Tohoku School. A symposium was held at the University of Tokyo on April 14 to mark the launch of the initiative.

● Symposium Participants Range from International Agency and Government Officials to High School Students!

The symposium was attended by approximately 400 people from educational institutions, companies, NPOs, international agencies, and the Japanese government. An opening address from Professor Suzuki explaining what the symposium was about was followed by addresses from invited guests, Ángel Gurría, the Secretary-General of the OECD; Takumi Nemoto, ex-Minister for Reconstruction; Shinichi Yamanaka, then Vice Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology; and Ambassador Kazuo Kodama, Permanent Representative to the OECD,



and welcomes from University President Makoto Gonokami and Dean Toshiyuki Omomo of the Graduate School of Education. These were followed by a keynote address by Professor Kiyomi Akita of the Graduate School of Education. Greeting from Ángel Gurría, Secretary-General of the OECD



Professor Kan Suzuki with students from the cluster high schools

School of Education, one of the network's board members.

Next, presentations were given by representatives and pupils from the high school clusters in Tohoku, Hiroshima, and Wakayama that are participating in Innovative Schools Network 2030. The presentations covered the experience with the Tohoku School, chronological history of Fukushima and its ongoing recovery process, and the activities of the Asia high school students forum, and also included details of future plans and expressions of determination. What was particularly impressive was how the students eagerly expressed their enthusiasm despite being nervous.

Finally, the event closed on a positive note with the Dean of GraSPP, Hideaki Shiroyama, giving a strong affirmation of the responsibility to take a leading role in presenting an educational model for people who can proactively offer ways of solving the many challenges that face modern society.

● Collaboration between Domestic and Overseas, and between Policy Research and Practice

The network will involve GraSPP working with the OECD and interested parties from throughout Japan on the research and development of new educational methods. The basic concept is to develop and promulgate next-generation learning through "think-tank" activities that pursue education research based on international collaboration and "do-tank" activities that integrate education research and practice, with the three main topics of study at present being as follows:

- What competencies (abilities required to solve one's own problems) are needed in the 21st century?
- What learning models (teaching methods) are effective at fostering these competencies?
- How can competencies be assessed (evaluation methods)?

Specifically, by managing the network in collaboration with the Education 2030, an OECD working group, the aim is to work toward the integration of educational research and policy under an international framework. In Japan, the focus will be on getting things up and running, with the intention being to invite schools from throughout the country to participate (in addition to the above clusters) and to obtain feedback on the outcomes.

● Updates available on web site!

News about the upcoming activities of the network will be posted on our web site (<http://innovativeschools.jp/>). Please visit our web site and participate or support the network in whatever way you can. Let's all take time to think about the future of education in Japan.

Makiko Kubo Project Associate Professor



Benefits of being a Practitioner Teacher

A year and three months have already passed since I landed in the world of teaching and research, having left behind a government job at the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism. As a practitioner teacher at GraSPP, I have been involved both in giving lectures on maritime policy and on pursuing studies into the ocean, one of the few frontiers left nowadays. It is thanks to the environment provided by the University of Tokyo that I have had this wonderful opportunity to be able to spend my days working with researchers from a wide variety of university faculties who also study the ocean, drawing on my experiences from outside academia. I am looking forward to continuing my studies so that I can generate new knowledge by acting as an interface between the needs of society and the latest research at the university.

Along with my lectures, research, and other work at GraSPP in my role as a practitioner teacher, I also enjoy greater opportunities for looking objectively at the organization and policies of government and for treating them as subjects for study. The benefits have included insights gained by taking a step back from the work I had been doing in the past. Taking a fresh overview of how

policy has evolved at the ministry where I used to work has made me aware that the direction of policy has changed considerably over the last 20 years or so. Along with a trend toward deregulation, there has been a shift toward user-oriented policies that emphasize social diversity and sustainability, with policy objectives having been redirected toward improving the quality and diversity of public services provided by a variety of different organizations. For example, the policies of promoting barrier-free access to public transportation infrastructure were instigated with the aim of making it easier for the elderly or disabled to get around, and were seen at the outset as a challenging goal that would require capital investment. Now, while issues still remain, things like railway station elevators and buses with low floors for easy access have become a commonplace sight. Consideration is now moving on to providing barrier-free access for families with small children or overseas visitors. While many challenges still exist, with new ones emerging as the old ones are overcome, when I look at it from a medium- to long-term perspective I am aware of a steady accumulation of policy that has led to large and fundamental changes in society.

GraSPP Course Report

No.13

Mai Iida

MPP/IP Year 2

International Field Workshop

[Instructor]

Prof. Toshiro Nishizawa



In early March, when my friends were all off enjoying their spring break, I was still in class. The difference was, rather than the Hongo campus, this class took place in meeting rooms at international agencies in Washington D.C. and New York.

One of the great strengths of GraSPP is the opportunity to study under people who have worked in the field. This includes working not only in university classrooms but also going off-site, sometimes even overseas. The International Field Workshop is a valuable course that provides the opportunity to talk directly with people from overseas who are active in the field.

Opportunity to come into contact with a wide variety of subjects

The course is open to about ten students, including some from different departments. There is a selection process to go through at GraSPP, but once that is cleared you get the chance to talk to students of other departments about questions you would not normally deal with. For myself, I was able to learn about certain terminology and experimental work in the field of medicine with which I had been previously unfamiliar. As the course includes visits to a wide range of international agencies, including finance, development, and healthcare, it expands your outlook considerably.

Planning our own workshop

We started making our preparations for the March visit around December. Each of us was assigned an agency to contact and suggest topics for discussion on the day of the visit. I was assigned along with two other course students to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). We had a number of meetings to prepare presentation material and worked with Professor Nishizawa to coordinate with the UNDP. Giving presentations on our own specialties and then receiving feedback directly from specialists working in those fields was a hugely valuable opportunity.

It is one of the unique features of GraSPP that it enables you to make contacts not just in Japan but internationally. It is not often that you get the chance to deal with this many international agencies and talk with people actively involved in work overseas. While it may be tough to get into, I would encourage you all to consider taking up the challenge posed by this popular course.

Student Interview



Akiko Fukuyama
Legal Policy Program, Year 1

▶ No. 20

— It is very rare for someone in Japan to enroll in a graduate school more than a decade after obtaining a bachelor's degree. What prompted you to do this?

It was suggested to me at my work (at the Secretariat of the House of Representatives) that I should study at graduate school. In fact, going to graduate school was something I wanted to do, given the opportunity, and I had indicated this in a work opinion survey. So I was delighted when I found I would be able to study at GraSPP. Of all the national and public graduate schools in the Greater Tokyo Area I could have chosen, I went with GraSPP because what it offered was the closest to what I wanted to study. Also, an older man at my work had graduated from the school. He had been there seven or eight years ago, and when I went to talk to him about it, his comment was that, although GraSPP may have changed considerably in the intervening years, he was very glad he had gone there.

I have always wanted to work in a governmental agency and while I started as a non-career employee, once there I found there was no difference from the work of a career staff position and that the workplace was very fair and easy for a woman to work at, without any discrimination between male and female employees. I am very lucky to be able to work there. The attractions of the workplace included the comparatively large number of opportunities it provided, albeit of a limited scope, to come into contact with a different world, including dealing with ministries and government offices. I had once been temporarily assigned to the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, and it was a good opportunity to see the difference between the executive and legislative branches of government.

Prompted by my job preparing documents summarizing the points at issue or other data relating to proposed legislation and providing it to parliamentarians, the motivation behind my desire to attend GraSPP was the feeling that I ought to do more study to improve my underlying capabilities. I also wanted to expand my horizons.

— How are you finding the lectures?

The fact that so much of the teaching is linked to actual policy has made me glad I chose to come to GraSPP.

In the Principles of Microeconomics course taught by Professor Tatsuo Hatta, which I am taking this semester (S1), not only is there much that relates directly to actual policy, it is also valuable because of the opportunity to hear a lot about the professor's candid views. It was very condensed and packs a lot into a short time. However, I need to balance this with other courses and it preys on my mind that I have had to defer two of the four credits I need in economics until next year. What is worse, the courses I plan to take next year will likely be in English, which is not my strong point. I get an ominous feeling whenever I think about it.

— Is there anything you have found difficult about going back to the life of a student?

There are times when I don't understand what some of the younger people are talking about and I don't feel like I can inquire on the spot. I really ought to just ask and not be so timid about it.

I have also joined up with LINE. Seeing as it wasn't needed for work, I had never used social media before and I was able to get by with just an old-style mobile phone. I had been wondering to myself, though, that social media and a smartphone would be essential I became a student once again, and just as I had anticipated, everyone started exchanging their LINE accounts as soon as we started class. So I had to race off and buy a smartphone.

As Professor Tsujita set up a Facebook group for a case study course, which is used to upload course material, I have also joined Facebook. I am now making a tiptoeing start with both LINE and Facebook. I am astonished at how today's younger generation is so savvy about IT tools and social media.

(Interview and text by editor)



GraSPP, It's Good to be Back

Kazuyo Hanai Project Research Associate

Hi! I'm Kazuyo Hanai from the fifth class of GraSPP. After completing the International Public Policy Program at GraSPP in March 2011 and obtaining a doctorate from the Department of International Studies (DOIS) at the Graduate School of Frontier Sciences, I returned to GraSPP this spring. I am researching the links between the problem of natural resource conflicts in the Congo and Japan's consumer society.

As I originally studied history education, I struggled to keep up with my classes when I first started at GraSPP. I had a lot of support from the people around me, including friends who organized study groups and supported me during speeches in English classes. I have fond memories of all the time we spent on group discussions to prepare for presentations on case studies or exercises on "International Conflict Studies," "the United Nations Security Council and Conflict Resolution," "Development Studies," and "Aid Policy."

What also left a lasting impression were the discussions I had with students from both GraSPP and DOIS while working as a teaching assistant. Even when thinking about the same social issues, GraSPP and DOIS each take a different approach. Whereas GraSPP students take a big-picture view of how to use policy to resolve issues, DOIS students try to work closely with the people on the ground to develop a deep understanding of the roots of problems. My impression is that having both working together enables a complementary and effective approach.

This complementarity was realized in our disaster support activities.

My starting at DOIS in April 2011 came straight after the Great East Japan Earthquake. Because there were so many students who wanted to do something to help the affected areas, the UT-OAK Disaster Relief Mission was jointly set up as a student volunteer group. Some of the students I had been with at GraSPP had jobs for NPOs and we worked together going back and forth to Minamisanriku in Miyagi Prefecture. This started out with providing emergency rations for evacuation sites and subsequently extended to things like support for people in temporary housing and teaching aid, with activities still ongoing to this day. On-site activities have been undertaken 66 times over four years, with help from a total of 362 people, including GraSPP students. I take pride in this as a worthwhile activity where DOIS and GraSPP have pooled their resources.

The Global Leader Program for Social Design and Management (GSDM) with which I am currently involved is a program that takes a cross-disciplinary approach to seeking out ways of resolving social issues involving 20 majors from nine graduate schools, with GraSPP playing a central role. Whatever the issue, comprehensive solutions should be able to be found by having leading researchers and practitioners from each field contribute their depth of knowledge. I aim to help GraSPP students be able to utilize their knowledge in a variety of fields. Returning after four years away, I am looking forward to meeting the next generation of GraSPP students.



On May 16, students from the University of Tokyo, Seoul National University, and Peking University visited the Yasukuni Shrine on a field trip that formed part of the coursework for the CAMPUS Asia Summer Program 2. This tour of the shrine and the Yūshūkan museum, both of which are at the same site, exposed the tour participants to the Japanese history and culture as well as the shrine itself. Among the comments were that the Japanese perspective on the war history exhibited at the museum was a very interesting new discovery, and was accompanied by much discussion among the students from Japan, China, and Korea.



I hope you have enjoyed our special women's issue. There has been a recent delightful news about Nadeshiko Japan, our national women's football team, being runners up in the women's world cup. Despite losing to the USA in the final, this was simply a fantastic result, with the team being deserving of their silver medal and captain Aya Miyama winning the Bronze Ball award having played superbly. They are currently fourth in the FIFA rankings (as of the most recent update on March 27). GraSPP, too, has many women who are achieving their potential, whether it be as teachers, staff, or students. I look forward to having further occasion to introduce these "cool girls!" (Editor)

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